

1/6 EVERY FRIDAY

Autosport

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

IN THIS ISSUE

SEASONAL SURVEY
A Review of 1950
Formula 1 Racing

The M.G. TD MIDGET
MARK II—Road Tested

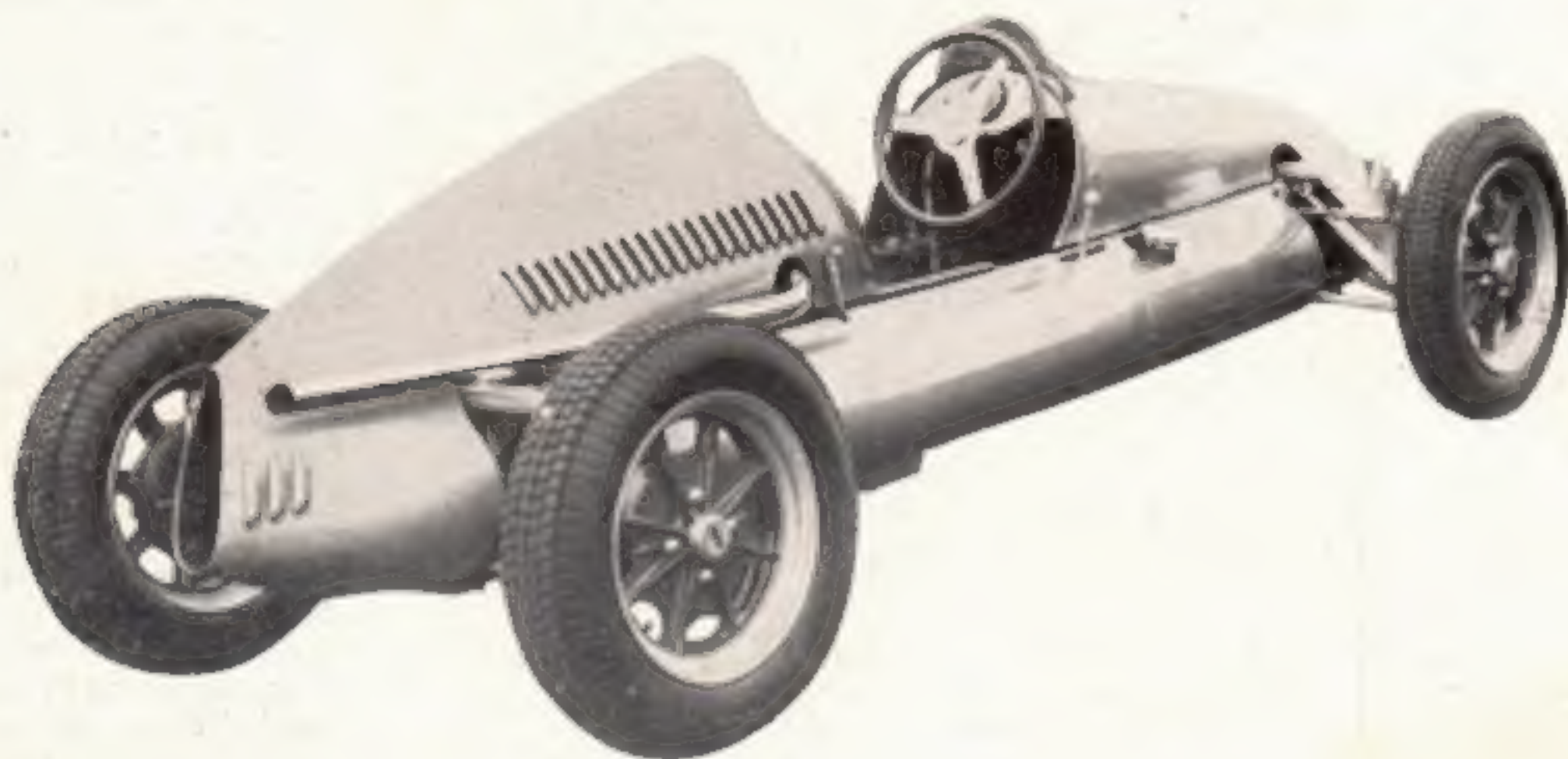
Whither the Unsuper-
charged Engine?
by John Bolster

Russell Lowry's
Northern Lights

Vol. 1 No. 19
December 29, 1950

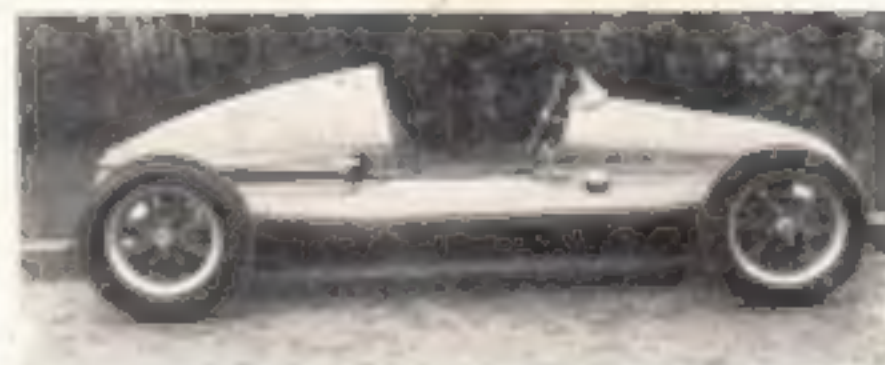


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- 5 All castings in magnesium.
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Autosport

BRITAIN'S MOTOR SPORTING WEEKLY

Incorporating "THE MOTOR CLUB"

Managing Editor: GREGOR GRANT

Vol. I No. 19

December 29, 1950

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NOTICES

Published every Friday by AUTOSPORT,
32 Great Windmill Street, London, W.1.
Tel. GERard 3193

NORTHERN OFFICE,
65 South Street, Liverpool, 1.
Tel. ROYal 1246

Business Manager: JOHN S. CAMPBELL
Advertisement Manager: NORMAN H. BIGSBY
Annual Subscription: £4 4s. 6d.
Direct from the Publishers or all Newsagents

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EDITORIAL

THE old year draws to a close. Great Britain has done little of note in International Formula 1 racing. In Formula 2, H.W.M.s have scored several places and an outright win with a Belgian driver at the wheel. Formula 3, on the other hand, has almost entirely been dominated by this country, although there are definite signs that other nations covet our success in this popular class. Our cars have done well in sports car racing. Abroad, Aston Martin and Allard have kept the Union Jack flying at Le Mans. Jaguars added to their Silverstone successes with an outright T.T. victory and followed it up with a high speed demonstration at Montlhéry. Austins carried on their ever-growing list of distance records and the Kieft became the first British car to take Formula 3 records.

British cars have been active in every branch of the sport. We must keep it up, and strive for success in *all* classes, to further our industrial prestige and with it our overseas trade. All are hoping the B.R.M. will benefit from its harrowing 1950 début and re-emerge next year a truly race-worthy challenger to Italian domination of Formula 1. The Bourne car has obvious potentialities—it is no Sefac or C.T.A.-Arsenal—and AUTOSPORT longs to be able to headline a race account "B.R.M. wins its first G.P." early next season. This can only be possible providing B.R.M. gets adequate support, not solely from the public's five shillings, but from the industry.

John Heath's Formula 2 H.W.M.s will re-appear in 1951 as faster single-seaters. They will face the formidable V-12 Ferraris, the ultra-light Simcas, and perhaps new German Formula 2 machines. With the extra speed from their Alta engines, 1950 reliability, and drivers of Stirling Moss calibre, victory should not be beyond the H.W.M.s and would be fitting reward for this plucky venture.

Will British racing cars, then, win events in Formulas 1 and 2 as well as Formula 3 next year? It is a big hope, but never before has it been so close to fruition. If, in addition, British sports cars amplify the promise shown this year and can outmatch the Continent's best, then indeed will our place be strengthened in the world's export markets, currently so vital to the nation's existence.

A mediocre showing in 1951 could mean depleted order books, such is the significance of competition success nowadays. The upholding of the flag is a task, not for the few gallant individuals and far-seeing concerns but for the British motoring industry as a whole.

OUR COVER PICTURE

VIRTUOSO: Driver of the year, Stirling Moss, cornering with the unsupercharged, 2-litre H.W.M., during the B.R.D.C. "Daily Express" International Trophy race at Silverstone last August.

Pit and Paddock

NO secret that Austins were tickled pink with Ken Wharton's success in the R.A.C. Trials Championship with his A40 Austin-engined special. Good publicity for their new sports model we should think! Jowetts also thought highly of Reg Phillips's performance. Mr. Ford can still afford to smile, however.

• • •

AUTOSPORT wishes everyone connected with the sport of motoring a "guid new year".

• • •

DUNLOPS have chipped in with a seasonal gift to the tune of £5,000 to assist in the founding of a proper test-track.

• • •

ASTON-MARTIN Owners' Club held a most successful cocktail party in the Cock Tavern, Fleet Street, on 19th December, during which the St. John Horsfall Trophy was presented to John Rowley.

• • •

RAY MERRICK has managed to secure the services of Robin Jackson for next season's racing. He will race both 500 c.c. and 1,000 c.c. Coopers. The former will have a power-plant with a "double-knocker" Norton head, and for the bigger stuff the Jackson wizard will breathe urge and reliability into a J.A.P. "eleven-hundred".

NEXT year's Grand Prix of Luxembourg is to be a Formula 3 event, which will make it the first National G.P. exclusive to 500 c.c. cars.

• • •

STRANGE that no toy-maker came forward at Christmas with models of the B.R.M. Only ones we saw were made at Barcelona, but they were obviously hand-made and required more than a few pesetas to purchase them.

• • •

AUTOSPORT wishes to announce the appointment of Mr. C. Posthumus to the post of Assistant Editor. Mr. Posthumus has been on the editorial staff for several months and has contributed many telling articles to the magazine. He is well known as an author-historian and is a skilful model-maker.

• • •

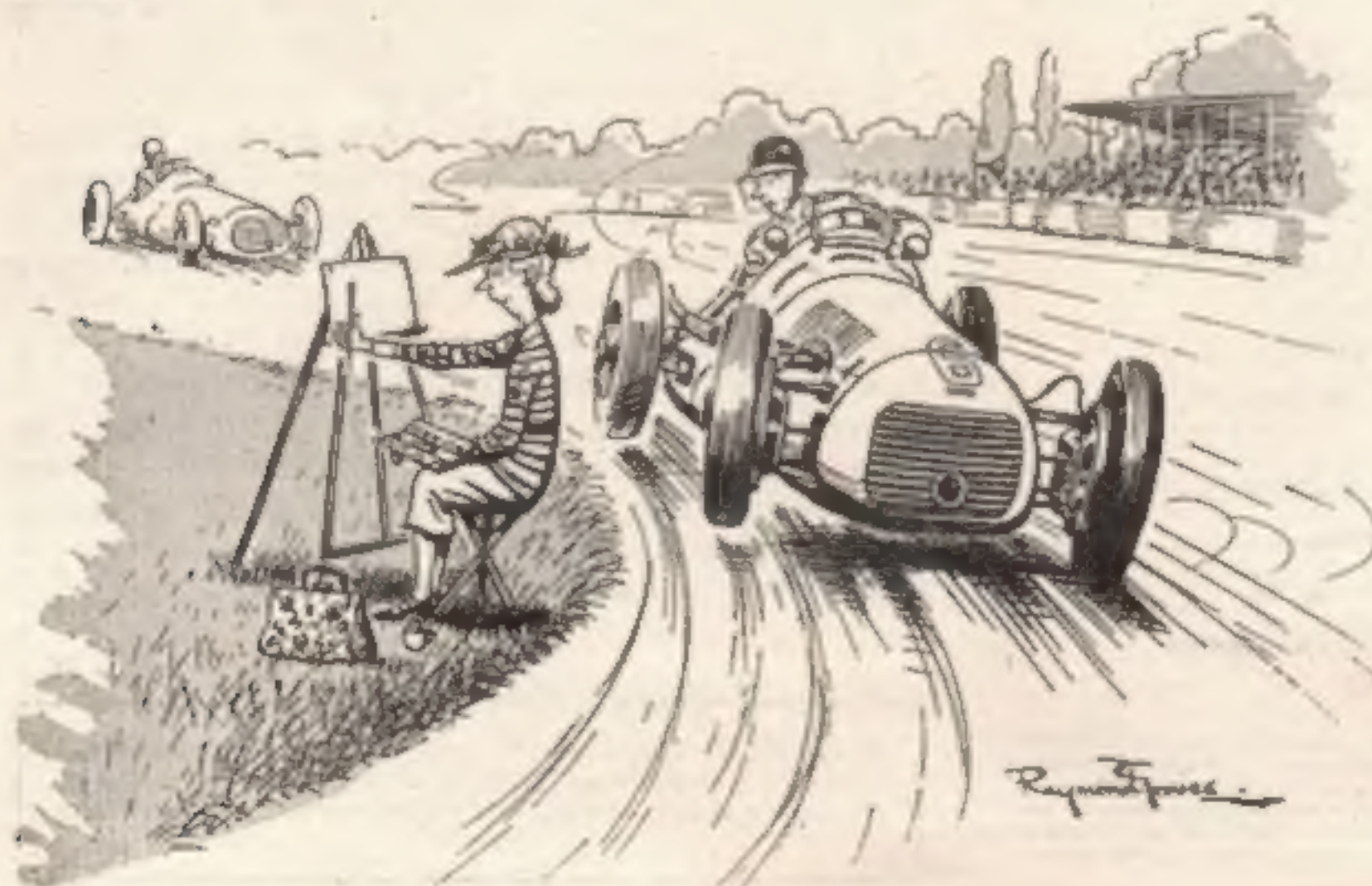
GERARD CROMBAC is busy on a "Saga of the Simca". This should be most authoritative as M. Amedée Gordini is co-operating with our French correspondent. The article will, of course, appear in AUTOSPORT.

• • •

ULSTER CORNER: We hear that ex-motor cyclist Noel Hillis has acquired Joe Kelly's Maserati for next season's dicing. . . . R-type M.G. conductor, Geoff McCrea is at present fabricating a 750 c.c. rear-engined trials special, with a couple of gear-boxes floating about the chassis. . . . Film show of the U.A.C. saw a completely packed house. Projection was, as usual, in the capable hands of R. W. Allingham and the flicks included Rootes's "Alpine Rally" with commentary by J. L. Downing, and the splendid Shell production of the I.O.M. T.T. and Royal Silverstone.

• • •

GORDON SHILLITO is re-building his Riley and embodying a tubular chassis of his own design, together with other features which must at present remain secret.



Fireballs and Hot-Irons



CALIFORNIAN HOP-UPS MAY APPEAR CRAZY
TO THE UNINFORMED BUT THEY DO KNOW
HOW TO SOUP UP AGED JALOPIES

by
Everard Boyd

As that most plagiarized of all writers, the late Damon Runyon would say: "I am standing in Main Street minding my own business when who should give me the big hello but Junior. Only I am not pleased to see him as he is seated in a Gook Waggon which is a souped-up jalopy fashionable with the kids in this man's town."

Not long after the Japs kicked in, and young G.I.s were streaming homewards, Californian parents became aware of a new movement centred on Culver City. Teenagers, made thrill-conscious by the hurly-burly of war, became bitten by the auto-racing bug. Like the British "special" builders, these kids got more pleasure in rolling their own, than if they'd been able to buy genuine imported European racers.

Gradually the movement spread, and with it came a brand of hop-talk that was about as intelligible as Sanskrit to the average layman. Tyres became skins, presumably because they peel off at speed on a dry-lakester, which is a hot-iron developed for time trials on dry-lake circuits abounding in the south-west.

Pistons are slugs, exhaust pipes are stacks; in fact every single component of an automobile has its own peculiarly apt descriptive term.

Worn-out heaps mouldering on used-car lots were revitalized by mechanically-brilliant youngsters, many of whom received training as conscripts in the Army. These "elder brothers" were, of course absolute gods to the kids in their town. They formed the brains behind the entire hot-rod movement. Although started mainly as an amateur pastime for fireballs with highball cars, in next to no time the sometimes dangerous chal-

lenge "races" on the State Highway became organized into the now excellently-formed timing associations which have come into being all over the U.S.A.

The things that have been done to many an antique jalopy to make it go quickly have shaken the auto industry. Several of the speed shops have souped up touring motors to give power never dreamed possible by even the most experienced race-track mechanics. The art of "adding lightness" has been meticulously studied, and many a 275 cubic inches (about four litres) veteran stock model has finished up weighing not much more than a modern European Formula I car.

In the "twenties", when Louis and Arthur Chevrolet produced their 16-valve, twin-o.h.c. Frontenac Ford conversion, and many other Ford conversions such as Akron-Hed, Rajo and whatnot were amongst the unaccountable aids to speed on the market, the craze for souped-up stock cars rocketed and then fell away again. Perhaps the 1929 depression hit the speed shop industry, or maybe ordinary stock cars became as quick as the conversions.

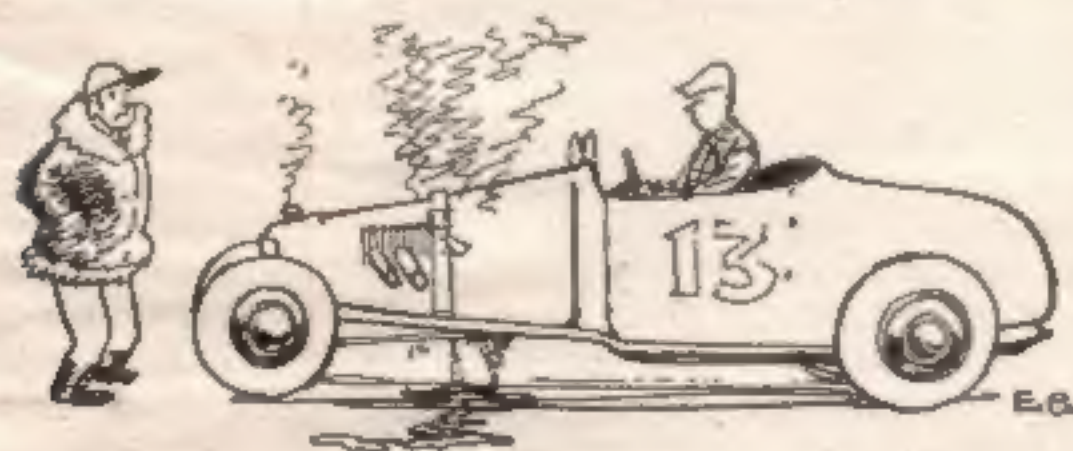
The modern hot-iron can be described as a genuine attempt to get well away from the present-day American near-standardization in auto design. I still find the greatest difficulty in distinguishing individual makes of post-war models, and can readily understand the remarkable wave of enthusiasm for "different" cars that has hit the U.S.A. Undoubtedly this explains the tremendous popularity of European sports cars such as M.G., Jaguar, etc.

I doff my fedora to the whole hot-rod fraternity. Disbelievers in Great Britain should note that the fully aerodynamic Xdias-Batchelor, with souped-up Mercury V-8 motor, was officially timed both ways over the mile straightaway at Bonneville, at 189 m.p.h.

Great care is taken to ensure accurate timing. The Electronic timing equipment normally operated by chief timing official J. Otto Crocker is meticulously checked. The American magazine *Road and Track* quotes figures of 27/100ths of a second fast in twenty-four hours. On the slide rule, this works out at a maximum error of .00192 seconds for a quarter-mile run taking six seconds.

The various timing associations compile their records with the utmost accuracy. All courses are measured by qualified surveyors, and it is sheer hokey to suggest that many of the high speeds credited to hot-rods were covered on the American "short mile". There is no such thing. A mile measures exactly what it does in Britain, namely 5,280 feet.

(continued overleaf)



Fireballs and Hot-Irons—continued

The same is true of power-outputs. Bench tests are carried out on most of the better-known hot-irons by independent authorities on checked dynamometers. For example, six-carburettor, Chevrolet motors modified by Wayne, have, without forced induction, given well over 200 b.h.p. The figures were obtained on standard aircraft-type dynamometer equipment supervised by specialized automotive engineers. Several much-modified V-8 units have also delivered over 200 b.h.p. with normal aspiration.

One of the most novel of the dry-lakesters is Los Angeles hop-up Howard Johansen's Mercury. This is largely based on Piero Taruffi's twin-tank Tarf "500" and has been officially timed at El Mirage Dry Lake to exceed 170 m.p.h. Lee Chapel's streamlined "Tornado", with o.h.v. V-8 motor is also very fast. The Oakland boy has gone to the aerodynamic Mercs. and to Goldie Gardner's M.G. for inspiration, to say nothing of John Cobb's Railton.

These cars, of course, represent the *élite* of the dry-lakesters. Remarkable figures have been obtained by chopped jalopies of up to twenty years old. At a recent dry lake meeting, 125 m.p.h. was timed by a 1935 Ford coupé.

The success of the hot-rodders has resulted in the springing up of many well-equipped speed shops. Auto components manufacturers catalogue much special equipment for modifying stock motors. Special cylinder heads (including o.h.v. conversion), streamlined manifolds, multi-carburettor sets, balanced crankshafts, super-light flywheels and dozens of other examples of special equipment are stocked. Leading makers such as Edelbrock, Offenhauser, Navarro, Hallibrand, Schiffer, Winfield, Grant, Burns, Weiland and Knudson are kept busy satisfying the demand for speed equipment.

The stock car hot-irons are gradually developing away from ordinary road cars, and there is little doubt that in the near future many more concerns will follow Meyer-Drake and Kurtis into the field of series race-car and race-motor production.

Largely due to the enthusiasm of imported sports car owners, there has been a marked revival in road racing proper in U.S.A. It is only a matter of time until real formula racing is organized. Already many of the rodders have drifted to the new 500 c.c. movement, and British road racing motor cycle motors are in brisk demand.

I can only conclude by saying that the promised renaissance of road racing in America has been mainly due to the persistence, skill and extraordinary ingenuity



of the once-despised fireballs and hot-irons, who scared the pants off other highway-users in California, till such time as they formed themselves into properly-organized timing associations. Also to the thousands of genuine auto enthusiasts who sincerely believe that the American industry could produce real motor cars if they were permitted to do so by the dictators of Detroit.

THE R.A.C. TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP

Some Interesting Facts and Figures

THE north, for the third successive year, won most of the honours in the R.A.C. Trials Drivers' Championship, although a southern driver, Godfrey Inhof was runner-up. Seven northerners finished in the first ten places, which is a remarkably high percentage considering that they had twenty-nine starters, compared with the twenty-five entered from the south.

The twenty-nine northerners lost a total of 4,042 marks as against the 3,536 lost by the south. The two Ulstermen lost 153 marks, and the Scottish pair, 398. However, taking retirements as having lost the maximum number of marks (210), we find that the areas finished as follows.

Area	No. of starters	Retirements	M'ks:	
			Lost	Average
North	29	1	4,042	146.7
South	25	2	3,536	158.7
N. Ireland	2	1	153	184.5
Scotland	2	—	398	199.0

Therefore the north scored handsomely over its principal rival, with Northern Ireland a poor third, and Scotland holding the wooden spoon.

Again, of the first ten, six cars were equipped with Ford Ten power-units. However, an Austin A40 was in Wharton's winning machine, Reg Phillips's Fairley (third place) had a 1½-litre Javelin, Gerry Pentony's Cyclops (sixth place) was fitted with a Vauxhall, and ninth man, Ken Rawlings, had a Vanguard.

Thus for the first time in the series, the Dagenham-built engines had much stiffer opposition, and did not sweep all before them. As for the other non-Fords, a Javelin and a J.A.P. twin were amongst the four retirements, the other two being Ford Tens.

There were only five cars in the large category, and it is all the more credit to W. T. Todd, the Northern Ireland entrant, that his ex-W.D. Humber finished losing fewer marks than the others, who were all V-8-

equipped, and included Alec Francis in his formidable H.R.G.-Mercury.

Superchargers were used by twenty-seven of the fifty-eight starters, but only three of the blown cars finished in the first ten. The Championship was, of course, won by a compressorless Austin, Imhof's blown Ford-engined car was runner-up, and Phillips's Fairley was unblown. There appears to be a lesson to be learned in these facts.

THE M.C.C. "EXETER"

THE large entry of 256 was received for the M.C.C.'s Exeter Trial which starts from Stratford-on-Avon, Plymouth and Virginia Water to-night. Arrival times of the first competitors at the various sections on 30th December are: Fing'e Bridge (6.45 a.m.), Stonelands (7.12 a.m.), Simms (7.30 a.m.), Higher Rill (8.40 a.m.), Harcombe Special-Test (9.05 a.m.), and Meerhay (10.20 a.m.).

Silhouette Spotting

AN AUTOSPORT PUZZLE CORNER



(1)
This racing car has none of the G.P. "musts". It has rear "coil springs", no twin overhead camshafts, no two-stage blowing—but it wins G.P.s!

(2)
Nobody liked this one, and it never won a race. Its nickname mars the skyline of any British town. Its designers tried hard to do what the Italians later did much better.



(3)
Some readers love this, and spurn its successor—others vice versa. It was descended from one of the best-loved touring cars ever to be marketed.

(4)
This eagle was something of a sheep in wolf's clothing, but it did its autobahn-storming successfully. Its name is the same as a certain instrumental virtuoso.



HOGMANAY QUIZ: Further to test your knowledge and powers of observation, here are some simple questions of the type beloved by club quizmasters: (a) Who won the first 500 c.c. race to be held in Great Britain, and where was it? (b) After Raymond Mays, which driver has broken the Shelsley record on most occasions? (c) Which engine did the prototype Cooper two-seater "500" use? (d) Apart from Fords, which British V-8 engines were produced between 1935 and 1939? (e) What reason was given for the ban on competition tyres? (f) Who holds the Silverstone club circuit record? (g) Which British car manufacturers of to-day were originally connected with the motor cycle industry? (h) What engine was fitted to the 1½-litre Squire? (i) Name five makes of engines fitted as standard on Morgan three-wheelers prior to 1930. (j) Which machine broke International class records for twenty-four hours yet was only driven in daylight? (k) Name a famous driver who was as famous in saddle and stirrups as in the seat of a racing car.

(A set of four sparking plugs will be awarded to the sender of the first all-correct solution opened of quiz and silhouettes. Closing date, first post, Wednesday, 3rd January, 1951.)

Sporting Owner Drivers' Night Trial

WILD WEATHER BUT J. R. L. BARRETT (JOWETT) WINS THROUGH

INACTIVE since 1938, the Sporting Owner Drivers' Club put itself back on the map (One inch Ordnance Survey, sheet 159) last Saturday night with its first Night Navigation Rally, which attracted an entry of twenty-four cars from amongst its own members and those of the A.C. Owners', Chiltern and "Berko" Clubs. A dozen control points, specified by the usual six-figure map references, had been chosen in picturesque corners of the Chiltern hills, but, when the Clerk of the Weather took over from the Clerk of the Course, something resembling a condensed Monte Carlo Rally resulted. At times squally snow showers reduced visibility to a few feet and road conditions, especially on the back lanes over which most of the route lay, were sufficiently tricky to call for low average speeds and to inhibit the use of brakes. Even so, the sharper bends and steeper slopes were patterned with evidence, in the shape of tyre tracks in the snow, of the most improbable manoeuvres.

An eleventh-hour change of plans took the start to *l'établissement*

Curly Dryden ("The George" at Dorchester in Berkshire) where an epicurean meal fortified competitors for the rigours ahead. The issuing of route cards and dispatch of competitors began shortly after closing time and was quickly followed by a violent fall of snow. Of the twelve points, four were manned by marshals and the rest marked by concealed code words printed, with seasonal greetings, on a card hidden at each reference point. Looking for these in a blizzard made the seeking of needles in haystacks seem an exact science and, indeed, no competitor succeeded in locating the lot. The marshals at one manned point had an entirely undisturbed night, the Printer's Devil having left a figure out of their map-reference—what, no proof-reading?—and at least one of the greetings cards was swiped by someone with a puckish sense of humour: but competitors pressed on undeterred.

From 5 a.m. onwards, congealed but undaunted crews arrived at intervals at "The Bell", Aston Clinton, where something memorable in breakfasts rewarded them for their

persistence. While it was clear that the event had been won outright by the English Climate, J. R. L. Barrett, who had driven down from Peterborough specially to compete, looked in about 8.30 a.m. to say that he had found nine of the twelve points, and was dissuaded from resuming the hunt only by the information that he was already the winner. His achievement can be measured by the fact that, of the rest, only eight handed in route cards, and these but partially completed. The organizers are to be congratulated on everything but the weather, and in particular on their choice of catering establishments, which suggests that future events by this enthusiastic club will be well worth attending.

PROVISIONAL RESULTS

Night Trial Trophy for best member of Promoting Club—J. R. L. Barrett (1950 Jowett).

Best Visitor—Peter Jackson (Chiltern C.C.), (Triumph Roadster.)

First Class Awards—Norman Button (S.O.D.C.), (TC M.G.); Dr. Pinkerton (S.O.D.C.), (4-litre Lagonda.)

THE MONTE CARLO RALLY

Portugal, Holland and Germany oppose Proprietary Engine Ruling

CORRESPONDENCE between the Royal Automobile Club and other National Automobile Clubs on the subject of Act 9 of the Rally Regulations—the banning of cars fitted with other car manufacturers' engines—reveals that Portugal, Holland and Germany support the R.A.C.'s view that this rule is undesirable: other countries have yet to reply.

It is clear that the International Sporting Club fully realized the implication of this regulation from the start and are sincere in their belief that it represents progress towards their aim of confining the Monte Carlo Rally to standard touring cars only. It is encouraging to note, how-

ever, that the President of the International Sporting Club has supported the R.A.C.'s action in asking other promoters of International Rallies not to adopt the same regulation.

The total number of competitors in the Rally, which will take place from the 23rd to 31st January, 1951, is 362—of whom seventy are British. The six starting points and the number of competitors starting from each are as follows: Monte Carlo (129); Lisbon (76); Stockholm (67); Glasgow (65); Palermo (17); Oslo (8).

* * *

ISLE OF MAN T.T. PRODUCTION CAR RACE

Proposed 1951 Race on 23rd May

THE projected race for standard production cars over the famous 37½ mile motor cycle T.T. course in

the Isle of Man looks like becoming a reality for 1951, and the Manx Automobile Club have provisionally settled on 23rd May as a suitable date for the race, with practising on the 18th, 19th, 21st and 22nd May. Interest has been considerable, and the Club state that most of the likely entrants favour a race of at least seven laps—i.e. the same distance as in the motor cycle T.T.; and that a minimum of fifty entries would be necessary to ensure success.

The next step is to obtain Legislation and Grant for the event from the I.O.M. Government, and the question comes up for discussion in January. With this satisfactorily achieved, it is hoped that some financial assistance can be arranged for competitors to get to the course, and that an attractive list of prizes can be offered.

PLYMOUTH M.C.

Outdoor Social Event, 17th December

ALTHOUGH the spectacle of sixteen motor cars performing peculiar gyrations at Central car park obviously mystified the gallery of Plymouthians who witnessed the P.M.C.'s final social event of the 1950 season, it was quite apparent that at least the drivers and passengers of the cars knew what they were doing. Strange antics were due variously to the tests involving blindfold driving with the passenger giving verbal instruction as to the course to be taken, handcuffed competitors driving in a figure of eight course against the watch, drivers using foot controls only, while passengers carried out associated manual operation in a forward-and-reverse, also timed, and lastly motor croquet in which the passenger had to manoeuvre a football through a hoop with the aid of a suitable hammer in the minimum number of strokes. Tests over, competitors were allowed an hour and a half to find the answers to a bewildering and ingeniously set "general knowledge of Plymouth" quiz, and there are lots more people who now know "when the S.S. *Tory* left Plymouth for New Zealand", and "when and by whom the South Torpoint Ferry was built". Solving the problem of "who, when and where" took the cars to Beacon Hill Hotel, Newton Sellars, for tea, followed by an hour of lusty carol-singing and the always popular twenty questions.

RESULTS

Visitors' Award—Test and Quiz. G. Snurdon (M.G.).

P.M.C. Award—Quiz. R. Ham (Morris 10).

P.M.C. Award Tests—G. H. Turnbull (Vauxhall Velox).

* * *

SOUTH-WEST M.G. DINNER

ICY roads and a snow-covered landscape only succeeded in adding a seasonal atmosphere to the Christmas Party given by the M.G. Car Club (South Western Sub-Centre) at the Seymour Hotel, Totnes.

Following an excellent buffet tea, members adjourned to the Club's first Annual General Meeting, which must have created a new record for speed and despatch, as within thirty minutes (twenty-nine minutes, thirty and three-fifths seconds to be precise) the past season's efforts had been

reviewed, officers elected for 1951, and a résumé of next year's events discussed in detail. An hour's films then followed, including the recent Dunlop "Endurance". The effects of the heavy tea having now somewhat abated, 140 members and guests sat down to a full Christmas Dinner (even if it was a week premature). The dining hall had been beautifully decorated for the occasion and candle-lit tables and general ensemble were greatly appreciated. After dinner came "The Party" which had everything from an indoor version of "The

Devon Rally", The Totnes Grand Prix (vehicles, bath-chairs), a more than hectic relay race which eventually developed into a game of soccer with policemen's helmets, to the arrival of Father Christmas in person, his sleigh quite naturally being drawn by Rudolph the Reindeer of Red Nose fame. The final arrival of the Wassail Bowl was greeted with considerable enthusiasm and carols and the proceedings finally concluded with a concerted dash around the ballroom by all present to the strains of "Jingle Bells".

The Mallyan Spout Party

M.G. (N.E. CENTRE) MAKE MERRY

AMID the swirling, soaking mists and gales of the Gouthland Forest the Mallyan Spout Hotel provided an oasis of light and cheer during the week-end of 9th December, the occasion of the third version of M.G. north-easterners' popular Mallyan party. The almost unique system of holding a dinner and dance *before* a trial instead of after, has much to commend it, and the pleasures of the evening lost nothing by being tempered with discretion! It was very hard luck on the industrious Harry Pounder, organizer of the gathering that a wandering germ, coming to rest in his internals, kept him on a diet of physic and water. Only by demonstrating real north-country stamina was he able to see the programme through. But he did—without a hitch, ably supported by the "oldest inhabitant" of the Centre, Nommie (short for Tommie) Stonehouse.

The morning of the road event dawned amid torrential rain, but the course was all on made roads so discomfort was the only penalty, coupled with the impossibility of finding a waterproof substance for marking the various lines A and B involved in the six driving tests spread over the run. These were of varied and interesting character. There was a downhill acceleration and braking test on a gradient pessimistically sign-posted as "1 in 3", a regularity hill-climbing test, a fixed speed test and other capers to enliven the streaming atmosphere. Nor did the sprinkling of Specials have it all their own way and one at least lost a

halfshaft in its efforts to excel. To wind up, the entire entry was taken on a conducted tour of a three-mile lap, and then was despatched, at intervals, to reproduce an exactly similar time. Not as easy as it sounds. After all this the very worthy winner was found to be R. G. Godsmark with a total error on all tests of no more than 3.4 secs. He had come all the way from Louth with his TC early in the morning and had to return the same night. Stout effort. A very close second was J. Snowden in what appeared to be one of the original Tailwagger Allards. Miss Chapman driving a TC took the prize for N.E. Centre member and R. A. Ward secured the "Best M.G." on his TD. The Team Award went to a very goodhearted performance in three widely differing types of car exemplified by Alan Ensoll's stark but neat Ensoll Special, John Robson's Singer and S. Robinson in a Triumph Mayflower.

As a keen frost, presaging snow, began to congeal the swimming moors, competitors, reinforced by tea and log fires, dispersed towards home.

RESULTS

Best Performance (Paragon Trophy)—R. G. Godsmark (M.G.).

Best N.E. Centre (Lockwood Trophy)—Miss Chapman (M.G.).

Best M.G. (Nuffield Trophy)—R. A. Ward (M.G.).

First Class Award—J. Snowden (Allard).

Second Class—J. Robson (Singer), S. Robinson (Mayflower).

Third Class—A. Ensoll (Ensoll).

Team Prize—Hartlepool's Club team: Robinson, Robson, Ensoll.

The Overhead Camshaft M.G.s

Their Overhaul, Maintenance and Tuning

by PHILIP H. SMITH, A.M.I.Mech.E.

THE next assembly to receive attention is the ignition distributor of the standard coil system. Even if consideration is given to fitting one of the special high-voltage or "Sports" coils now available, the same work will be necessary on the distributor. The main requirements when dealing with this component are use of the correct tools and cleanliness. Many of the parts are easily damaged, particularly screw-threads. It is not proposed to describe normal maintenance procedure, which will be familiar to readers, but rather to give emphasis to the "little extras". Having dismantled the unit, cleaning must be done with a dry cloth, no liquid aids being allowed. Examine the moulded distributor cover for cracks which, while unlikely, can be caused by careless removal and refitting. If any such are found, the cover must be scrapped, as makeshift repairs are not good enough for this class of vehicle. The electrodes in the interior of the cover should be trimmed with a fine file to remove pitting, and the central carbon brush must be quite free in its holder, with the spring making good contact and gripping it firmly.

Burning on the Rotor

The rotor of the distributor is arranged to clear the electrodes by a few thousandths of an inch, the actual degree of clearance not being critical. Some P-type engines (or maybe some rotors of the period), seemed to suffer from burning of the rotor to a remarkable degree, demanding frequent renewals, but rotors are not expensive, and if trimming with a file does not produce a serviceable rotor, a new one must be fitted. If too much metal has to be removed from the rotor edge, excessive electrode clearance will result, and a decision should be made on this basis. Just to finish off, polish the rotor contact arm with metal polish all over.

The contact breaker unit complete with its base will have been removed, and after completely dismantling the components, and cleaning the points in the usual way, finishing off with superfine emery cloth on the points, the items can be reassembled. The older type of blued contact breaker spring was apt to break after a moderate mileage, but the modern type, of bright steel, which will doubtless be fitted, has a very long life. The fit of the rocker arm should be checked on the pivot. This should be quite free, but without side rock. A trace of engine oil on the pivot assists in free movement.

As regards the fixed contact, there are no particular snags here, except to ensure that the tongue carrying the contact is at right angles to the base when the fixture is clamped down. Juddicious bending will get this right, and obviously any error will give faulty lining-up of the two contacts and prevent them meeting squarely. With the unit on the bench it is an easy matter to get everything "just so" as far as the make-and-break is concerned.

Before re-making electrical connections, such as for example, those to the condenser and L.T. terminal, polish the metal to afford the minimum electrical resistance.

The opening of the contact points on all four lobes of the cam should be checked, as equality of opening is important, because any variation means that the spark timing will vary as between individual cylinders. Any discrepancy can be corrected by carefully easing the appropriate lobe with a carborundum strip. The actual fully-open gap was originally specified as 15 to 18 "thous" but it is considered that something nearer .012 in. gives just as good results and results in an easier time for the mechanism.

The automatic advance-and-retard mechanism, housed below the contact-breaker, is easily dismantled for cleaning. If it has been neglected, a good deal of dirt will probably be found in the housing, but apart from that, trouble is rare, as considerable freedom is allowed in the pivot mechanism. Should a broken spring be found, be sure to fit the correct replacement, as the tensions vary. The normal method of lubrication of the device is via an oil-duct which is revealed after removing the distributor rotor-arm. It is doubtful if this is really adequate for the purpose, though the makers probably consider that too little oil is better than too much. With the mechanism exposed fully by removal of the contact-breaker base-plate, however, it is easy to give every pivot the right amount of oil, and, by oscillating the cam with the driving shaft held firmly, to see that everything is working as it should.

The main driving shaft wears very slowly, and a little extra clearance in the bearings is not critical, providing it does not amount to real sloppiness. There is an oiler on the side of the housing, which is all too frequently neglected, and even allowed to get full of dirt. If this appears to have happened, the spindle should be examined very carefully for scoring, and rectified with fine emery cloth if necessary.

(To be continued)

LANCE MACKLIN (opposite)

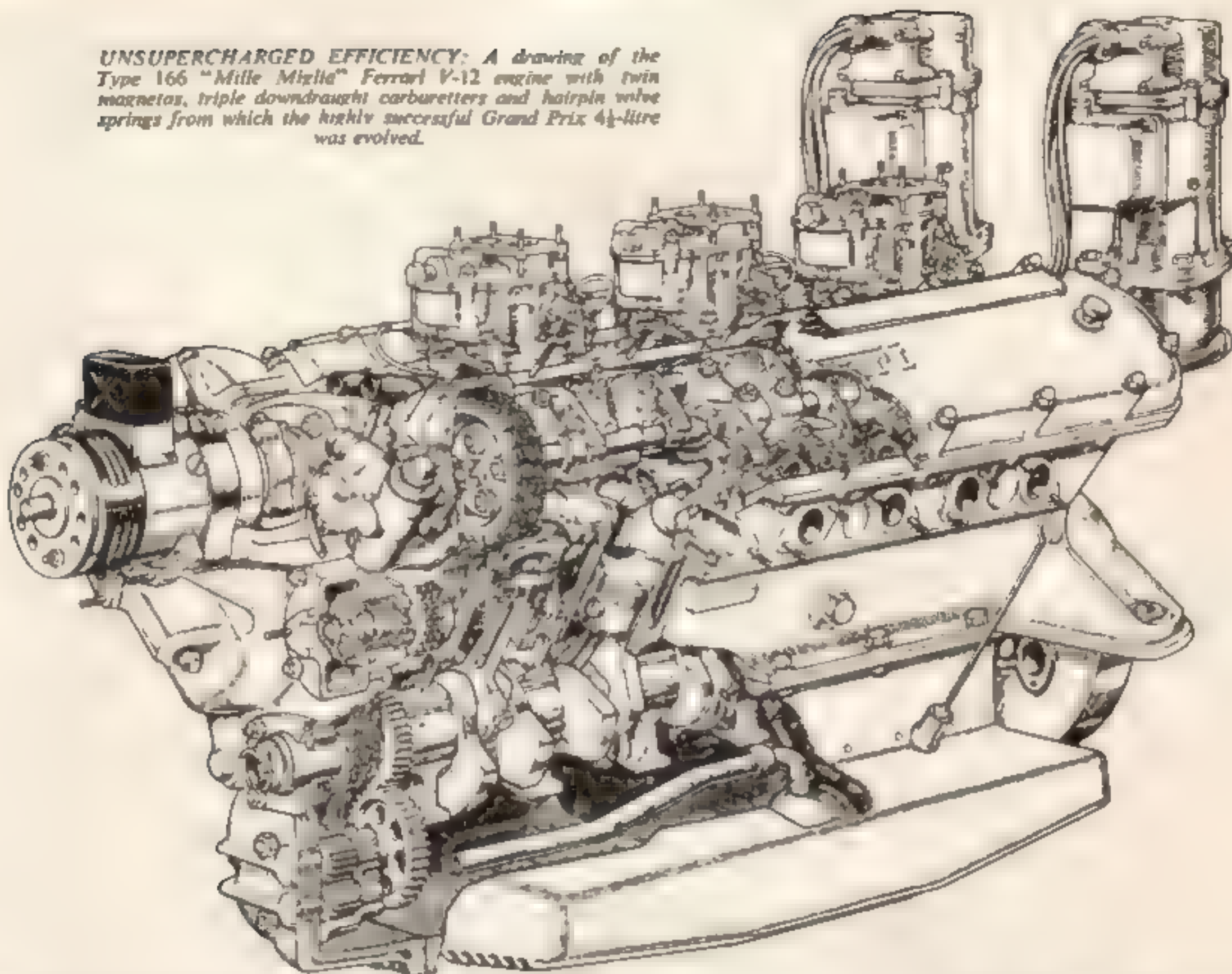
SON of the late Sir Noel Macklin, who was associated with Silver Hawk, Eric Campbell, Invicta and Ration cars, Lance Macklin has caught the eye of the motor racing public with his performances in Aston Martins and H.W.M.s. He appeared at Silverstone Park, Brighton, in 1947 with the four-wheel-drive Fuzzi, the twin J.A.P. engines of which had been replaced by a V-8 Mercury. He afterwards drove a 6C Maserati in a few events with such aplomb that he was invited to handle one of the original DB Aston Martin team cars at Le Mans in 1949. In company with George Abernathy, Macklin won the E.R.A. Trophy for 1950. This very promising driver will be seen in many important races during 1951.

Portrait Gallery

Lance Macklin



UNSUPERCHARGED EFFICIENCY: A drawing of the Type 166 "Mille Miglia" Ferrari V-12 engine with twin magnetos, triple downdraught carburettors and hairpin valve springs from which the highly successful Grand Prix 4½-litre was evolved.



Technical and Otherwise

by John Bolster

Whither the Unsupercharged Engine? (Part II)

LAST week I examined briefly the current situation with regard to unsupercharged racing engines, and made so bold as to assert that, whether the unit was constructed for Formula 1, 2 or 3, it should be able to develop over 100 b.h.p. per litre. I suppose therefore, that I had better try to justify my words, with a few concrete proposals as to how it might be done.

Empirical research, carried out independently by aircraft and motor cycle engine constructors, has proved that it is possible to develop an experimental unit until it produces a greatly augmented output. This is done by a laborious series of experiments on what is usually known as "ram effect". It is not necessary to go into the theoretical side of this manifestation at the present moment, except to say that the object of the exercise is to "tune" the natural frequency of the column of gas in the inlet and exhaust tracts.

To a limited extent, it is normal to make use of this effect on motor cycle engines, and by sacrificing low speed performance, a considerable gain is enjoyed at the top

end. This is brought about by using an exhaust pipe of a critical length and diameter, in conjunction with a megaphone of carefully proportioned shape. It is possible to go a great deal further than this, however.

If the inlet system is built up in conjunction with this type of exhaust, by introducing a ramming pipe of the correct length, an entirely different cam contour will have to be used. When all these factors have been brought into agreement, a simply astonishing increase in power can be obtained. It is, in fact, possible to produce a positive pressure in the induction tract, and a figure as high as 6 lb. per sq. in. has been recorded.

6 lb. of boost, without a supercharger, sounds just the job, but it is melancholy to record that an engine in this condition is of no practical use. The effect only "comes in" at one exact speed, and if the revs drop at all, the engine may not even have enough power to turn itself round. Certainly, it will prove almost impossible to start, and in fact it will be unable to propel a vehicle, in spite of its record b.h.p. output.

It would, theoretically, be possible to use our experimental unit in conjunction with an infinitely variable gearbox. The short answer to that is that, although more of these contraptions have been patented than any other mechanical device, nobody has ever raced one satisfactorily. I think one might assume, in any case, that if such a box existed, it would have been incorporated in the B.R.M.

If we are going to use this "ramming engine" in a racing car, we must modify it so that it is in no way inferior to its competitors in low speed torque, for this is almost more important than maximum b.h.p. I think it would be possible to do this.

First of all, some automatic method of varying the valve timing must be incorporated, and several expedients suggest themselves. It might be convenient to slide the camshafts end-wise, so that alternative sets of cams engaged the valves, or differently contoured cam followers might be introduced. Whatever arrangement was adopted it would not present an insuperable problem.

The second requirement is movable pipes to project through the centre of the megaphones, to cancel out their effect, and the third is telescopic ramming pipes on the induction side. The camshaft control, and telescopic exhaust and inlet pipes, could all be operated hydraulically from a servo motor, and the power used would be negligible. A governor would provide automatic operation, and would be no more difficult to design than the normal ignition advance and retard.

It would be best to scheme the body to incorporate the megaphones in its structure, and this could be done quite neatly. The fairly short exhaust pipes would not matter, as the silly old rule, requiring the tail pipe to extend behind the back axle, has fortunately gone for ever. The whole box of tricks, if properly carried out, would only add a few pounds to the weight of the completed vehicle.

In my first article, I mentioned the difficulty of achieving a reasonably high compression ratio if the stroke-bore proportion were less than unity. By using the ramming effect, a boost pressure would be built up, and this would increase the effective compression, exactly as in a normally supercharged engine. That would remove the only disadvantage of the short-stroke motor.

How great an increase in b.h.p. we may expect, is simple to answer, for it will obviously depend on the pressure at the inlet valve. In other words, the gain will be identical to that conferred by supercharging at the same pressure, plus the power that would have been expended in driving the blower. In practical terms, this means that an unsupercharged 4½-litre car could be developed which would comfortably "see off" any existing supercharged 1½-litre.

The deletion of the carburettor choke would be highly beneficial to any unsupercharged engine, but especially to the one we have just been "designing". This could be brought about by using fuel injection, and I consider that this will eventually be employed on all racing cars. Several experimental vehicles are now on the road which boast this novelty, and one powerful sports car that I was allowed to examine showed an improved performance and no snags. It seems likely, therefore, that we have not long to wait for this advance.

I hope that, in these two little articles, I have been able to prove that the unsupercharged engine, as it stands, is nowhere near finality. If one-tenth of the brains and money that have been applied to forced induction motors had been directed towards the improvement of the simpler type, I think that much-desired 100 b.h.p. per litre would have been left behind long ago. Now that, in all classes, the emphasis is on the unblown job, I am sure that very interesting developments are not far off, and I very much hope that the "ramming engine" is among them. What do you think?



RACEBRED SALOON

THE very latest production Ferrari with 2+4-seater bodywork by Superleggera. This car will be available with 2-litre, 2.3-litre and possibly 3.3-litre and 4-litre unsupercharged engines, with power outputs from the 140 b.h.p. of the Type 166 2-litre, to the over 240 b.h.p. of the 4-litre. With the largest of the range of V-12 engines installed, the Superleggera Ferrari must have claims to being the fastest sports car ever placed on the market, with or without a compressor.



RUSSELL LOWRY's

Northern Lights

TWIN-CYLINDER SPECIALS -WEATHER-CONSCIOUS CAR—THE WILSON BONNET—
TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP REFLECTIONS—WELSH RAREBIT—FILM SHOW THOUGHTS

IN extension of the good wishes already expressed to all enthusiasts on behalf of those associated with AUTOSPORT, here are more greetings, this time aimed from the north particularly to the north. May we long continue to enjoy the best of sports together!

* * *

THE north seems to be getting steam up over twin-cylinder-engined trials' Specials, but views are still very divided as to whether "something ought to be done about it". One of the most famous twin-cylinder exponents of all time, found himself drawn into the controversy, and expressed the view that by cutting a foot out of an old G.N. chassis, one could create a Special which would outdo any new-fangled contrivance.

* * *

THE following reflects one northern enthusiast's view of a certain very modern motor car, the name of which is sealed in a leaden casket and buried at the bottom of Loch Ness. So bad was the steering, says our informant, that the car slid off the road simply because he turned on the radio and heard a warning of wintry conditions. Having unditched himself, he proceeded on his way, and as further test of his mount's susceptibilities, assumed his best B.B.C. voice and announced that conditions would be Fair and Mild, whereupon the hood immediately folded itself away!

* * *

MIKE WILSON's well filled form has recently adorned the pages of AUTOSPORT dressed in the natty blue "rompers" which he affects for serious motoring. The pictures unfortunately do not bring out the crowning beauty of his bright red bonnet. One could scarcely call it a beret. The origin of this headgear is peculiar. It was found on the course during a Yorkshire Trial by a marshal who deposited it in Mike's car since he was Secretary of the Meeting and would be the most likely recipient of Lost Property Inquiries. Nobody turned up to claim it—small wonder?—agreed. So Mike popped it on his head where it was very readily visible to all and sundry. Still no claimant. Hence the pyramids—and the cherry on top!

* * *

AT the present moment toiling officials are working on the R.A.C. Championship results, away down south in Cheltenham. Why always there? Test matches move about, so most notably do golf championships. Why not the Trials Championship? Handsome admission of northern strength is implied in the list of "invited"

contestants considerably more than half of whom are northerners, apart from Scots and Ulstermen. Though Cheltenham is an admirable centre, in magnificent trials country we can rival it up here and have clubs capable of unexcelled organization. So how about a spot of rotation?

Anyhow, being an unblushing partisan I'll say what I think—and hope—that a northerner will have won long before you read this—and would do so if the event were held in Timbuctoo.

Incidentally, this office had a crop of agony calls about the Northern Experts' Trial which appeared in some calendars. It turned out to be the motor cycle event of that name, but the amount of interest was quite noteworthy among people who thought cars were involved. What about it? There are perhaps too many "top level" competitions already, but "Cock o' the North" would be a title worth winning and "Northern Lights" would be happy to put up a suitable pot.

* * *

AT the moment of writing, conditions are more suitable for skiing than motoring, but working on the theory about Ill Winds, most of the northern contingent of Monte Carlo Rally entrants are putting in as much practice as possible at the gentle art of snow and ice driving. Peter and Jack Reece, who will be handling the only Ford 8 in the Rally, are off to dice round as many Lakeland passes as possible, and when last seen, were ghoulshly hoping that the conditions would last. The hairpins on Hard Knott should be in cracking good form!

* * *

TALKING of hill-storming, I notice that the Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Club are planning a mass onslaught on Bwlch-y-Groes, the Hirnant and the Eunant Passes, for the spring. These roads have had a good deal of publicity lately, but none of it seems to have put the position very clearly. In actual fact, Bwlch-y-Groes, although slightly loose, is no obstacle at all to a modern car or group of modern cars, although as we have seen, it can play havoc with four hundred variegated vehicles trying to get across in the dark. The same thing applies to the Hirnant, although the cross gullies on this hill are a bit of a pest. Providing they are taken diagonally and at a rational speed, they should not cause any trouble. I am not quite sure of the present state of affairs at the very top of the Hirnant, where a landslide during the September rains blocked the short "balcony" stretch the day before the International Six Days Motor Cycling Trial was due to pass. Road gangs took the job in hand

SPECIFICATION and PERFORMANCE
DATA

Car Tested—M.G. Midget, Series "TD", Mark II, price including P.T. £633 5s. 1d. (see text)

Engine—4-cylinders, 66.5 m.m. x 90 m.m. (1,250 c.c.). Push-rod operated overhead valves, 9.2 to 1 compression ratio. Twin S.U. carburettors. Coil and distributor with automatic advance.

Transmission—Single plate clutch, 4-speed gearbox with remote control, ratios 1, 1.385, 2.07, and 3.50 to 1. Open propeller shaft. Hypoid bevel, semi-floating, rear axle, ratio 4.875 to 1.

Chassis—Box-section, with tubular cross members, carried over axle at rear. Independent front suspension, with wish-bone links and helical springs. Semi-elliptic rear springs. Hydraulic and friction

dampers, both at front and rear. Steel disc wheels with five-stud fixing, fitted 5.50 in. x 15 in. tyres. Lockheed hydraulic brakes, 2 L.S. in front, with 9 in. drums.

Equipment—12 volt lighting and starting. Speedometer, revolution counter, water temperature, oil temperature, and oil pressure gauges, ammeter, fuel warning light.

Dimensions, etc.—Wheelbase, 7 ft. 10 in. Track: front 3 ft. 11 3/8 in., rear 4 ft. 2 in. Overall length, 12 ft. 1 in. Turning circle, 29 ft. Weight as tested, 18 1/2 cwt.

Performance—Maximum speed, 88 m.p.h. Speeds in gears, 3rd 60 m.p.h., 2nd 42 m.p.h. Acceleration, standing quarter-mile 20 1/10 secs., 0-50 m.p.h. 10 secs., 0-60 m.p.h. 15 secs.

Fuel Consumption—Driven hard, 28 1/2 m.p.g.

been marred by the tuning operations, and one can potter along in top gear when in a lazy mood. The full performance of the car, however, is only available if one makes intelligent use of the gear lever. Given that type of handling, the lively little engine does not seem to notice the fairly considerable weight of the vehicle at all.

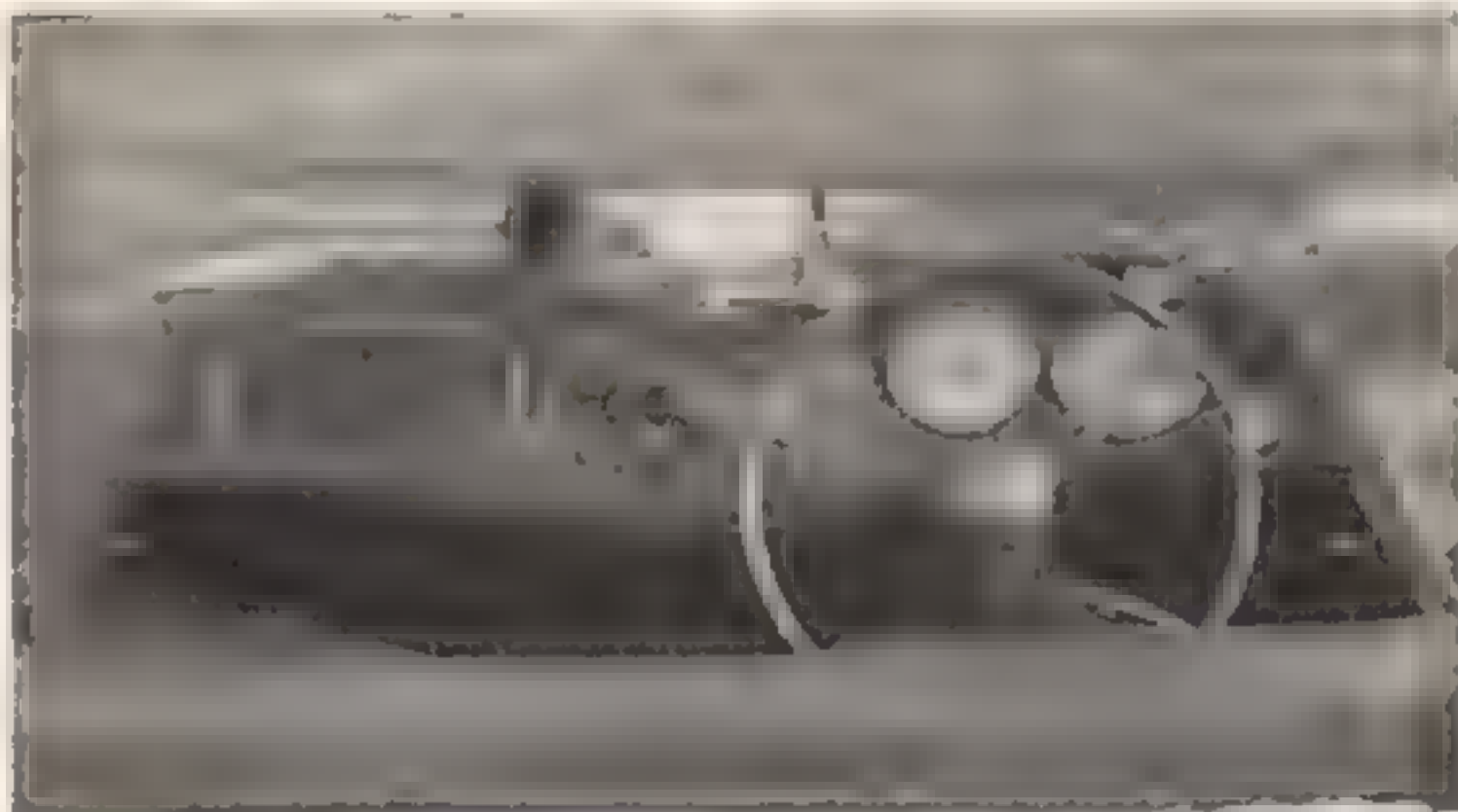
Easy Change Gearbox

The gearbox has an easy change, and is quiet on the indirect ratios. Third speed, in fact, is inaudible, and is consequently very pleasant as a traffic gear. Straight through changes present no difficulty, and the pedals are well placed for the "heel-and-toe" change down.

The Lockheed hydraulic brakes, with two leading shoes in front, are powerful, progressive, and do not fade. The mudguard design provides ample air for cooling, and scoops on the back plates assist the pierced disc wheels to circulate it over the drums. It is needless to remark that the well known "fly off" hand brake has been retained.

Plenty of luggage space is provided in the two-seater body, and a large glove box or cubby hole is positioned in the fascia. For touring, an external

(continued overleaf)



OFFICE: A pleasant feature of this M.G. is the fully-equipped and well thought-out fascia panel.

through the rack and pinion mechanism.

Violent cornering produces some roll, but this is not excessive. It is rather surprising that there is a slight over-steering tendency, which shows itself when one attempts to drift a bend. On the other hand, this makes the machine exceptionally easy to throw about, rendering it particularly suitable for such things as rally tests.

The little engine revels in hard work, and it seems impossible to over-drive it. Valve bounce begins at 6,200 r.p.m., but one can hold 6,000 r.p.m. indefinitely without causing any distress. At full bore, it naturally sounds "busy", but part throttle cruising in the seventies is a remarkably quiet and effortless proceeding, and is one of the most attractive qualities of the car. The flexibility of the unit has in no wise



POWER-HOUSE Only visible alterations from the Mark I are the large-bore S.U. carburettors and dual electric fuel pumps. The engine displays a healthy appetite for high r.p.m.



FRONT END: The Mark II TD M.G. has air scoops to the 2LS brake-drums, rack and pinion steering and Andrex dampers on the helical and wishbones i.f.s.

The TD Midget Mark II—continued

Luggage rack is available, and the eleven-gallon tank will be appreciated for such work. The hood and sidescreens really do give saloon comfort, and the hood disappears

when not in use. There is a neat locker for the sidescreens, but they are rather a tight fit and need care in stowing. The headlamps are mounted fairly high, and permit fast driving at night.

As can be seen from the data

panel, there is plenty of acceleration and the mean timed speed of 88 m.p.h. is excellent. The highest speed I obtained during the test was 92 m.p.h., but 90 m.p.h. was a commonplace, and I put the car round some bends at the latter velocity. A friend, watching this proceeding from the side of the road, reported that the "TD" looked steady and under full control.

Except for disc wheels and bumpers, the appearance is entirely traditional. The makers are obviously correct in retaining the "old look", for this is a best-seller, and a mighty dollar-earner to boot. It is a well proportioned car, and will entirely satisfy the very many customers who like an M.G. to look like an M.G. Nevertheless, the fine performance which it gives in its present form makes one wonder what a lighter and more aerodynamic version would do. No doubt the factory is far too busy, though, for any thought of an additional model to be entertained, and I expect the "TD" will be in full production for years to come.

In a few words, then, this is a car which will make many new friends for the marque without alienating any of the old ones. It is the best all-rounder that has yet come out of Abingdon.

JOHN BOLSTER.

Book Review—continued

As with cars, so in the motor cycle world, racing played a most important part in the development of better machines, and "Ixiom" relates how the Isle of Man T.T. races came into being in 1907, and how by 1911 the altered longer course stressed the need for variable gears, and helped considerably in getting them standardized. Unlike the bulk of our car manufacturers, however, who have shown only spasmodic and half-hearted interest in racing, the British motor cycle industry has always recognized the value of racing, has always supported it, and largely as a result of this policy, enjoys world pre-eminence.

In International motor cycle racing history, one finds no long eras of French, Italian or German domination as in cars—Britain has reigned supreme for most of the time, excluding the 1936-39 years when the Fascist countries thrust forward, while currently the Britain-versus-Italy battle enthralled the race follower.

But racing is only one of the subjects related to motor cycling which "Ixiom" covers and there are chapters on Six Days Trials, Scrambles, Speedway, Motor Cycles in War, British Roads, Inns, and Famous Makes. Seldom can 235 pages have offered so much interesting information, and with a host of photographs showing every kind of "bike" picture, the buyer certainly gets value for his

10s. 6d. Criticisms? Yes, "Ixiom" tells us the same things twice here and there, and though he is aware of this and apologizes for it in the preface, one still occasionally gets the feeling "I've been here before some time" and wonders if the wrong page was marked when last putting the book down. One's personal bias comes into it too, quite wrongly of course, and this reviewer, while recognizing Speedway racing's right to a section in a book on all branches of motor cycling, found less pleasure in reading about it after "Ixiom's" chapter on the real stuff, road racing. To be really fussy, too, one is surprised in so well produced a book to see an obviously post-1930 Douglas machine labelled 1921. A special chapter gives potted histories of nearly fifty famous makes, and is of great interest—not even the pumpered motorist-reader has a book giving him all that. The earlier history in this book is perhaps the creamiest, doubtless because one is more familiar with the recent stuff.

You may not like motor cycles or motor cyclists: some motorists don't—and vice versa of course—but you will derive first-class entertainment from reading about them in *Motor Cycle Cavalcade*, and may be surprised at the close kinship between the two and four wheelers its pages reveal.

C. P.



WE are delighted to receive letters intended for publication. We do not insist on typewritten copy, but please write in a hand we can decipher, and on one side of the note-paper. The Editor is not, of course, bound to be in agreement with opinions expressed by readers, but this does not mean that subjects will be excluded on these grounds.

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The Question of Piston Speed

NOWADAYS great stress seems to be laid on the assumption that a car engine should not exceed 2,500 ft. per minute piston speed for prolonged periods. The m.p.h. obtained at this piston speed is generally looked upon as the car's cruising speed. I think it is true to say that almost everyone of the motoring magazines uses this method in their road tests.

One is tempted therefore to ask how this figure was arrived at and by whom?

Personally I feel that this assumption is out-dated, as engines generally seem to be much more rigidly made nowadays. It may have been true in Edwardian times when the crankshaft, etc., tended to be a bit on the spindly side.

I should have thought that firms like Mercedes and the old Bentley concern, to mention only two of the long-stroke exponents, would have put paid to this idea.

It would be interesting to hear the views of the experts on this question. How about a 'Booster Article' on it?

A. C. BRYT

HOO, SUFFOLK

• • •

Film Fans Forward

THE lure of the celluloid screen having for once claimed us, my friend and I were enthralled to find that one of the films contained scenes from Brooklands and we are now appealing to any of your readers to identify the meeting and the drivers, etc.

The film was *A Fire Has Been Arranged* with Flanagan and Allen, and two of the cars were a Bugatti and a Bentley which were, as far as we could see, in racing trim. One of the incidental cars had a P.O. registration which was first used in 1929.

Can anyone help satisfy our curiosity, please?

T. J. NASH.

SALISBURY, WILTS.

• • •

Torquay Rally Echo

FURTHER to my letter (AUTOSPORT, 8th December) about the "1,000 Miles Rally", I should perhaps have mentioned that the distance between Dumfries and Blackpool is approximately 128 miles and was covered in three hours at an average speed of some

43 m.p.h., which is a good example of the capabilities of a modern production saloon car. The simplicity of replacing the rear spring is borne out by the fact that the operation took only one hour.

The Rally was certainly a good test for car and crew—it not being a "specialists' " sporting event—but some further system of elimination during the Rally instead of at the finish would have improved the event considerably.

It should be possible to arrange a method of penalizing more cars on the road section, and I am wondering if anyone has any suggestions, bearing in mind the large numbers of cars involved. Such arrangements would provide greater interest in the road section and would give an added filip to the Rally as a whole. Could not something also be done to prevent the high-powered "boys" from indulging in a little fast motoring and reaching their control three hours or more ahead of schedule without fear of being penalized? A few hours sleep in an event of this kind makes all the difference!

The Organizing Committee will perhaps bear these points in mind for next year's Rally.

RICHARD W. EVANS.

HADLEY WOOD, HERTS.

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Trials Specials

I AGREE with Mr. S. A. Cracknell's letter regarding trials specials. As a motor sporting enthusiast I should like to air my views on these vehicles, and the way I see things going on, trials cars of the future will be having engines behind the rear axle complete with radiator and spare wheels. The competitor and his navigator will be sitting on the top of the rear axle, using vertical steering columns, and the headlamps will be fitted on the side of the body well back because they will be too heavy to be fitted in the normal position.

I have attended a few trials and as far as I can see it is entirely up to the car and not the driver in winning trials to-day.

O. H. J. DAVIES.

PEMBROKE.

• • •

200 Miles Race for "500s"

WHILST I bow to Ken Carter's undoubted experience I most strongly disagree with his view that a 200 miles race would be dull and that probably no machine would be able to finish the distance.

Brooklands was not a "kind" track, yet back in 1926 Kaye Don ran for three hours at over 60 m.p.h. with the 500 c.c. Jappic—and in 1924 England won at over 75 m.p.h. on a LARGELY STANDARD Austin 7 (200 miles). It's not the car so much as the driver.

I may be heaping coals upon my head, but I am prepared to state that in both the 100 miles races for "500s" at least two-thirds of the entry blew up within twenty miles because they didn't even TRY to last the distance.

The best engine in the world, even a "double knocker" is liable to pack up if tuned for maximum output and then run at full bore—but very good results can be obtained with a fin-less dirt J.A.P. if a compression plate is installed and the engine is treated intelligently.

(continued overleaf)

Correspondence—continued

Don Parker has proved it so. What do the experts say?—come on S. Lancefield, L. W. E. Hartley, Bill Lacey and all you others. Could you not guarantee that an engine with say 12 to 1 compression ratio AND A REV. LIMIT would last 200 miles without failure? I'm sure you could. (Mr. Cooper does not need to guarantee the chassis.)

By all means let us have the 200 miles race again—with classes of say 500, 1,000 and 1,500 c.c.—because it is long distance racing which really proves the ability of both man and machine and improves the breed. The regs. should limit the number of spares permitted and put paid to "So-and-so" installing his third engine.

With six months' notice I believe I could provide a car to finish the distance.

N. A. SMITH.

LONDON, E.14.

* * *

The Unfortunate Schoolboys

MAY I say how much I agree with G. I. Whiston concerning the fact that as schoolboys, we are hardly able to go to any motor racing in England in 1951. I have found that I shall only be able to go to four events next year, of which only Brands Hatch is pure motor racing, the others being hill-climbs and a speed trial, which are not nearly so spectacular. Even in 1949 I was able to go to seven meetings, but now Goodwood and Silverstone are "washed out"—why should this be so?

I don't feel that this is a personal complaint, for I know there are many many others like us.

M. P. MORETON.

MILL HILL, N.W.7.

* * *

WITH regard to the letter in AUTOSPORT from an English school-boy, he does not know how lucky he is. I have never seen a race nor any motor sporting event as yet. I am young, keen and new to the sport but the main trouble is being domiciled in Glasgow. I should counsel the lad to count his blessings, as I do—the foremost among mine is AUTOSPORT.

JACK DUFF.

GLASGOW, W.4.

* * *

—and Schoolmasters

I HAVE every sympathy with your schoolboy correspondent of Wrekin College. Let it be a warning to him not to become a schoolmaster in due course, for he will then find himself unable either to spectate or compete at more than about one event per year.

I should also like to suggest a more inspiring name than B.R.M. Why not "Hereward", or "The Wake", who was, I believe, the Lord of Bourne and made a courageous stand against the foreign opposition of that time?

Finally, could any reader recommend a good textbook dealing with the basic principles of the motor car in order that I may be better able to appreciate articles by John Bolster and other technically-minded people.

R. A. LITTLE.

HASLEMERE, SURREY.

* * *

The Amateur and 500 c.c. Racing

THERE has been considerable correspondence in your columns of late on the subject of 500 c.c. racing and the impecunious amateur.

As at present, an outsider it seems to me that the problem is not that of how the amateur designer and constructor of limited resources can compete with the professionally built products raced by the more fortunate and wealthier participants in the sport but rather how those at present unable or barely able to afford to race at all are to be given a chance to compete.

As a means of doing this, I suggest the formation of groups, as has been done already by ultra light aircraft enthusiasts, who are now greatly helped by the introduction of kits of parts of approved

design. Already at least one 500 c.c. manufacturer has advertised kits of parts and, given support, I do not doubt that others would be quick to follow suit. A number of enthusiasts, then, could get together and form a group or club (or shall we call it a stable?) the main objective being of course to construct and operate a 500 c.c. racing car. Money could be raised by a weekly or monthly subscription—with possibly an initial entrance fee or levy to get started. All members would have an equal "holding" in the case of equal subscriptions, all work would be shared so far as skill and ability permit and, as in the case of the ultra light aircraft groups, all tools would be loaned to the group by the members. It would, in other words, be a real communal effort, requiring a real team spirit, while, obviously, a committee of some sort would be necessary to ensure efficient running of the project.

Stables of say ten to fifteen persons, could by hard work and enthusiasm put in enough work in a winter to enable them to have a "mount" ready for the next season's racing, and, with luck, two or three cars in the course of a couple of seasons.

With a good number of these stables, efficiently run, there is no reason why "impecunious amateurs" could not give some of their wealthier fellow conductors a good run for their money. There are, no doubt, plenty of snags, but I think, from my experience with the aircraft groups, that these could be overcome.

MAURICE O. IMRAY.

(Vice-Chairman Executive Committee, Ultra Light Aircraft Association)

LONDON, S.W.1.

* * *

Zinc Oxide in Lubricants

IN your issue of the 1st December, Mr. John H. Ahern makes reference to the performance of Keenol Q.4224 Gear Oil which he has used in the gearbox of his Invicta car.

In view of Dr. J. R. Edisbury's earlier remarks in the article "Keeping Waxes Oiled", where he suggests that the use of Zinc Oxide in lubricants has dropped out of fashion, I would like to point out that Alexander Duckham and Co., Ltd., manufacture and market a complete range of Keenol products. Both the gear oils and greases are compounded with specially prepared Zinc Oxide, the functions of which are to increase the load carrying capacity, to reduce wear and tear, to promote good run in surfaces, and to obviate scuffing. Zinc Oxide also acts as an anti-corrosion agent which, of course, is of special importance when Keenol greases are used for chassis lubrication or for wheel hub bearings.

J. S. JACKSON.

(Chief Engineer, Alexander Duckham and Co., Ltd.)

LONDON, W.14.

* * *

Grinding Paste on Surface Plates

I NOTICE that in your issue of 15th December, Philip Smith advocates the use of grinding paste on a surface plate to true up the body of the M.G. oil pump and cover. This method is, of course, the quickest way of ruining an accurate surface plate, which is after all a piece of precision equipment. No properly trained fitter or tool maker will allow abrasives near his precision surface plate! I suggest that this should be brought to notice for the benefit of the numerous enthusiastic amateur mechanics who doubtless read these articles. They may use plate glass if they like but this will not produce the results obtainable from the correct use of a good surface plate.

This is to use a flat scraper on the surface being rectified, with fitter's "blue" or "marking" used sparingly on the surface plate. By this means a joint can be produced which needs no pointing but which will still hold 90 lb. per square inch oil pressure without a trace of leaking.

Generally I would say use a file or scraper whenever you can to take down high spots—the engine will last longer! But first of all, learn to use these implements! I am rather horrified at the freedom with which Philip Smith recommends the use of abrasives.

W. F. RIDLEY.

LONDON, S.E.18.

News from the Clubs

NEWLY FORMED ALVIS

OWNER CLUB

Aims and Interests

THE newly formed Alvis Owner Club aims to unite, in social and competitive events, the owners of Alvis vehicles of all types and all ages. The sole qualification for membership is the ownership of an Alvis and a price in such ownership. A secondary purpose is to maintain a complete register of Alvis cars as far as practicable and to assist members in the obtaining of spare parts and by the provision of a department which will answer any query on the behaviour and maintenance of the Alvis. Those interested should correspond with the Hon. Secretary, P. Rich Birks, 201 Yew Lane, Ecclesfield, Sheffield 5.

• • •

CEMIAN M.C. DINNER-DANCE

THE annual dinner-dance of the Cemiian M.C. will be held in the Rembrandt Hotel, London, S.W.7, on 6th January. Guest of Honour will be Col. S. J. Worsley, D.S.O., M.C., M.A., Principal of the College of Estate Management.

• • •

HEREFORDSHIRE M.C.

ACTIVITY

Talk on Racing by Peter Walker

ON Tuesday, 12th December, the Herefordshire Motor Club held a meeting at the Talbot Hotel, Leominster, when a very interesting lecture was given by the President, P. D. C. Walker, on "The Inside Story of Motor Racing". Mr. Walker dealt at some length with this subject, during the course of which he recounted some of his past experiences with the "E" type and other cars he has driven. He also gave a very interesting talk on the B.R.M. and his experiences at Barcelona, after which many questions were asked and answered.

The club held a night trial on 28th November, when a torrential down-pour flooded the best part of the

Club Secretaries are invited to send details of the activities of their Clubs, for inclusion in this section. We would like you to regard this in the nature of a weekly Club Magazine, and a speedy way of informing your members as to future happenings.

course. The event was open to club members only and ten cars competed, the course running from Hereford via a fifty-mile course through hills. Some of the lanes were only just wide enough for the bigger cars, while R. C. Green (H.R.G.), who was leading the procession at one point, hit a large patch of water at some speed. After a hectic run, competitors eventually arrived at the finish, most of them being soaked through. The ultimate winner proved to be M. Morris (Austin A40), second was B. Butcher (Austin 7) and third D. Moon (Austin 7 Van).

• • •

A.C. OWNERS' CLUB

ACTIVITIES

Talk by Works Tester

THAT live body, the A.C.O.C., held a meeting at "The One Tun" Inn on 27th November, where, despite 1950 weather, twenty-six members gathered to hear Frank Fletcher, A.C. test driver, talk on a variety of A.C. subjects. Starting with a brief outline of the marque's early history, he then spoke on carburation, and finally on his experiences with the A.C. in last year's Monte Carlo Rally, all of which held listeners in thrall, and prompted them to pepper him with questions afterwards.

The club have made tentative arrangements for a members' fourteen day Continental Tour from 12th to 25th August, success of the scheme resting on members' response and, of course, on the current world situation. Though "organized" to the extent of helping and guiding along the route, the tour would be unregimented and informal, to ensure satisfaction and enjoyment to all.

A two-hour show of some of the well-known Shell-Mex films has been arranged by the club for Wednesday, 31st January, at the "Red Cow", Hammersmith, London, W.6, starting at 7.30. Members may bring friends, and the programme includes "Grand Prix, 1949", and "Royal Silverstone".

17th February is some way off, which will give A.C.O.C. members time to prepare for their annual dinner at the Casino Hotel, Hampton Court, close by A.C.'s Taggs Island works. On Wednesday, 28th February, the A.G.M. takes place.

• • •

SHEFFIELD AND

HALLAMSHIRE M.C.

January Dinner

THE current issue of this club's very informative *Gazette* underlines, among "Forthcoming Events", the annual dinner-dance and presentation of awards (winners please note!) at the Grand Hotel, Sheffield, on 12th January, at 7 p.m. The position in the Hallamshire Star Competition at the time the bulletin was written, showed that Mick Beardshaw has established a total of no less than 95 points, so taking the lead handsomely from Alan Hopkinson with 62. Hot on Alan's tail was Tony Alfred with 58.

A lament is sounded over the amount of equipment which is still missing after the High Peak Trial. This is urgently required for further use, so anybody who helped at the High Peak and has not turned in his bits and pieces, is requested to do so forthwith.

• • •

BOLTON-LE-MOORS CAR

CLUB

Brisk A.G.M.

As a result of the annual general meeting at the Blundells Arms Hotel, Bolton, last week, the committee finds itself reinforced by Eddie Ainsworth (of the green

(continued overleaf)

News from the Clubs—continued

Silverstone Healey). The meeting passed off briskly, and thereafter, club funds were augmented by Raymond Foley's spirited auctioning of a ladies' windcheater and a bottle of whisky. Having dined, the company enjoyed a full-length show of pre- and post-war films in what is becoming known throughout the north as glorious Twyfordcolour.

For the future, the idea is to produce some form of motoring event every four or six weeks.

* * *

**MORE ACTIVITY IN
CAERNARVONSHIRE**
Pre-war Club Restarted

THE Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Motor Club has now been revived, after a war-time lapse. Before the war, the body had a large membership and a long record of successful rallies and trials. It is less than a year ago that some of the pre-war committee got together and decided to start up again. Since then, new members have been recruited, and various events have taken place, mainly of a social nature, with the idea of building up the club spirit. The Hon. Secretary is W. Norman Owen, Estate Office, Bangor, Caernarvonshire, and the Hon. Treasurer is none other than that rosy-faced, sporting family-man H. D. Pritchard.

Fortcoming events include a dinner and film show, and when the days lengthen, the club is considering a mass whole-day onslaught on Bwlch-y-Groes, the Eunant and the Hirnant Passes, which have been the subject of much controversial correspondence lately.

* * *

**NORTH LONDON
ENTHUSIASTS' CAR CLUB**

ON Tuesday, 12th December, the N.L.E.C.C. held an interesting function at Pimm's Restaurant in the City. The idea was that John Eason Gibson and Laurence Pomeroy should give their views on the 1950 racing season, with John Bolster acting as interlocutor to keep the ball rolling.

After both speakers had given a short address, and the interlocutor had asked them some questions to confirm their points of view, there was an interval for refreshment.

The meeting was then thrown open to the house, and the fun was fast and furious. Eventually, the two Johns almost came to blows over who were our four best drivers, but "Pom" maintained that it was a great pity that racing cars couldn't drive themselves, and suggested that the results of races would soon be worked out mathematically without any motoring actually taking place!

* * *

**SPORTING OWNER DRIVERS'
CLUB**
Whipsnade Film Show

This Club held a successful Film Show on 8th December at the Chequers Hotel, Whipsnade. Between sixty and seventy members and their friends attended, and amongst the guests were W/Cmdr. and Mrs. Frank Arkens.

The films were loaned and projected by the Mobiloil Company and included a thriller of American stuntists, a romp through the rudiments of lubrication and a colour film of John Cobb's record breaking run at Bonneville Salt Flats.

* * *

**LANCS AND CHESHIRE C.C.
HOT-POT AT HAZEL GROVE**

IN spite of arctic conditions on the night of 14th December, there must have been a good hundred bods, at the Five Ways Hotel for this club hot-pot around the date of which so much argument had swayed. If the announced start had been a Time Check the meal itself would have lost a lot of marks, but the delay passed happily enough to the accompaniment of emptying glasses, and discussion of many burning topics. Perhaps the most urgent of all was the method of reaching Cheltenham for the Championship without the aid of dog teams!

When the inner man had been satisfied there was a Dutch auction conducted with great spirit by Ken Bancroft. A stupendous piece of ten-gallon headgear found many would-be owners. Who knows, perhaps it will be added to the array of sartorial peculiarities which already lend grace to our sporting events? Meanwhile the "discussion groups" waxed eloquent on everything from 500 racing to the rights

and wrongs of "forlorn hope" entries in such major events as the Monte Carlo Rally.

Then Jack Twyford, the cigarillo-smoking "Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer" of the north showed some of his choicest films, their colourful scenes of green grass and sunburned faces at Brands Hatch making strange contrast with the blistering wind and icy wastes of the road outside. Altogether a very happy assembly.

* * *

M.G. CAR CLUB

JOHN THORNLEY in a recent dinner speech announced that he will simply have to stop being General Secretary of the M.G.C.C. "as on and from" 1st January next. His commitments at the works make it quite impossible to carry on the double rôle.

The loss of John's genial guidance will be felt literally all over the world by club members who now number just a shade under 1,800—considerably more than the pre-war total. Centres are firmly established in many parts of America, in Switzerland, in Africa, Australia—and even in Tokio.

New secretarial arrangements are being made, but are not yet ready for announcement.

* * *

**RILEY MOTOR CLUB
NORTH-WESTERN CENTRE**

LAST year's Theatre Supper Party was so successful that a repetition has been fixed. The date is Friday, 12th January and a block of seats has been taken at the Belle Vue Circus. Supper will follow at the Bodega, Cross Street, Manchester. The cost will be £1 per head and the Hon. Sec. of the centre is E. M. Wainwright, "Denmor", Heybridge Lane, Prestbury, Cheshire. The centre's A.G.M. is scheduled for 28th February.

* * *

**RILEY MOTOR CLUB NORTH-
EASTERN CENTRE DINNER**

HOWEVER inaccurate the idea, it would be pardonable to think that all Riley Hon. Secs. on taking office were immediately sent on an advanced course in the mysteries of dinner organization. The annual affairs laid on by the North-East's

Hon. Sec. Asquith certainly support the notion, and this year's function was no exception. In spite of blocked roads all round Harrogate a goodly crowd turned up at the Majestic on 15th December. Means of transport took strange forms to suit the conditions and everything from "works vans" to Land Rovers had been pressed into service to take the place of more sedate saloons. Some people even used the railway—a dreadful thought. One very much regretted absentee was Victor Riley himself, confined to a presidential bed.

With dinner, dancing, and deftly-made speeches the evening passed all too soon. Thereafter visits were exchanged with another motoring affair taking place nearby and a guest who had been so ill-planned as to accept invitations to both was suitably dealt with!



STERN WORK! (Above.) Ulsterman Chambers has his pard in the right place on his TD Midget as he storms Edentrummy in the recent Newry Trial.



LET'S GO! (Left.) Wally Davidson's passenger about to bale out of the Austin Seven Beechwagon to get behind and push—another Edentrummy shot. They won the saloon car class.

B.A.R.C. YORKSHIRE CENTRE DINES AND DANCES

A Presidential Twenty-First

THE genial figure of Cyril Wilson has now presided over the affairs of the Yorkshire Centre B.A.R.C. for no less than twenty-one years, a fact that was appropriately signaled at the year's dinner-dance on 15th December, at Harrogate's Grand Hotel. Another notable fact was that no less than eight of the centre's active members were away in Cheltenham for the R.A.C. Championship—a fair measure of the club's prowess. But for the impossible road conditions most of them

would have stayed for the evening and then gone south through the night. Even without this stalwart company a noble gathering took place and revelry continued far into the arctic night.

CORBISHLEY'S "CHRISTMAS" VICTORY

CYRIL CORBISHLEY and his Vauxhall-powered C.C.S., won the Sheffield and Hallamshire M.C.'s annual Christmas Trial on 17th December. Tony Aldred (Ford) was runner-up. A full report and pictures will appear in next week's issue.

B.R.M.A. BRANCH OFFICIALS

Successful Visit to Bourne and Folkingham

ON 16th December, Raymond Mays played host to B.R.M.A. branch officials during the first of the arranged visits to Bourne and Folkingham. Despite the appalling road conditions, between twenty-five and thirty of the visitors arrived bang on time, some of them coming from places as far afield as Berwick and Cardiff. A couple of people in a Land Rover kept warm with a Calor Gas heater supported between the seats.

The enthusiasm of everyone was much appreciated by the B.R.M. staff. After being shown round the Bourne works, the party was taken to Folkingham to have a close-up of the racers; this was followed by high tea at Phipps Café.

These visits will be repeated every alternate Saturday during the next few months, so that all who are actively supporting the B.R.M. will have an opportunity to study the set-up first hand.



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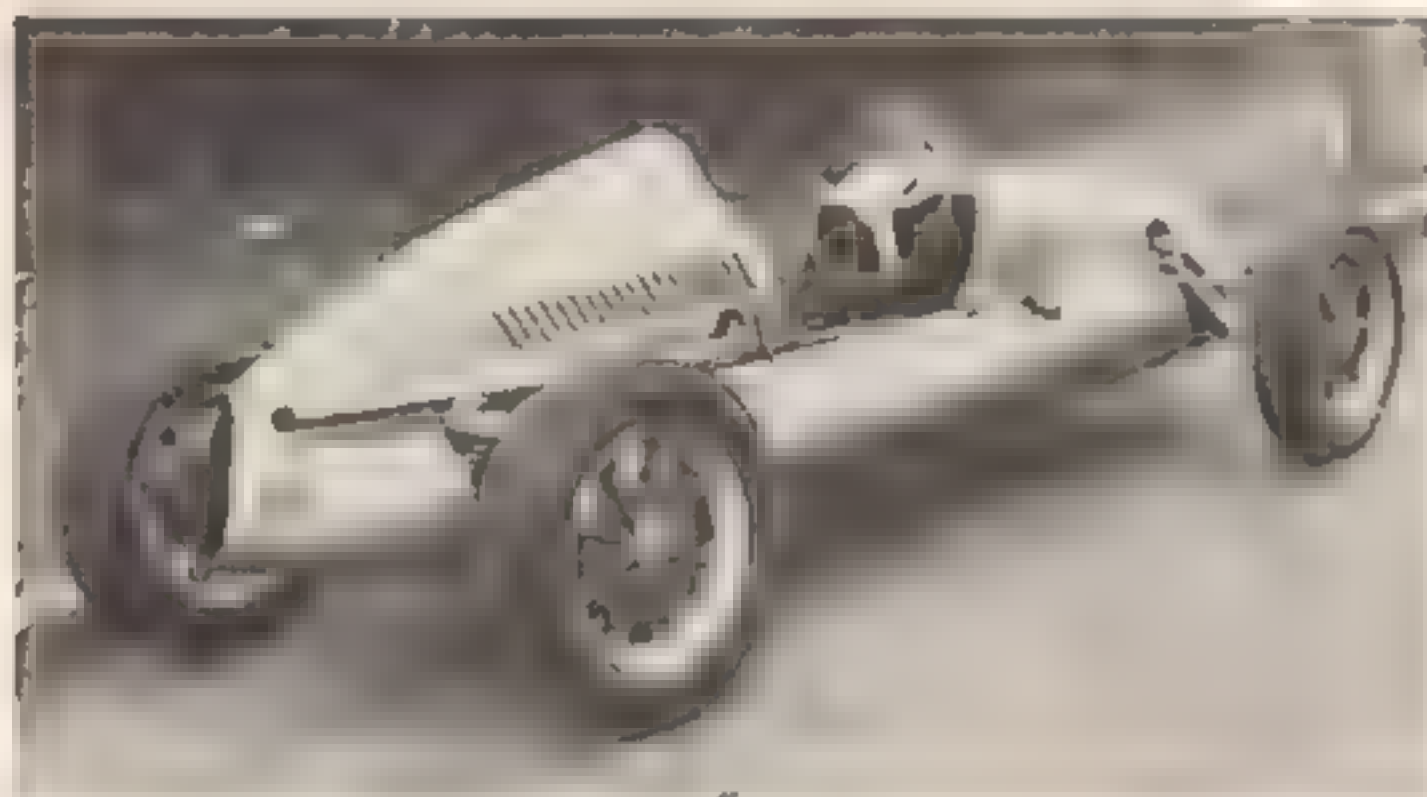


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PRESS DAY

FIRST POST, MONDAY

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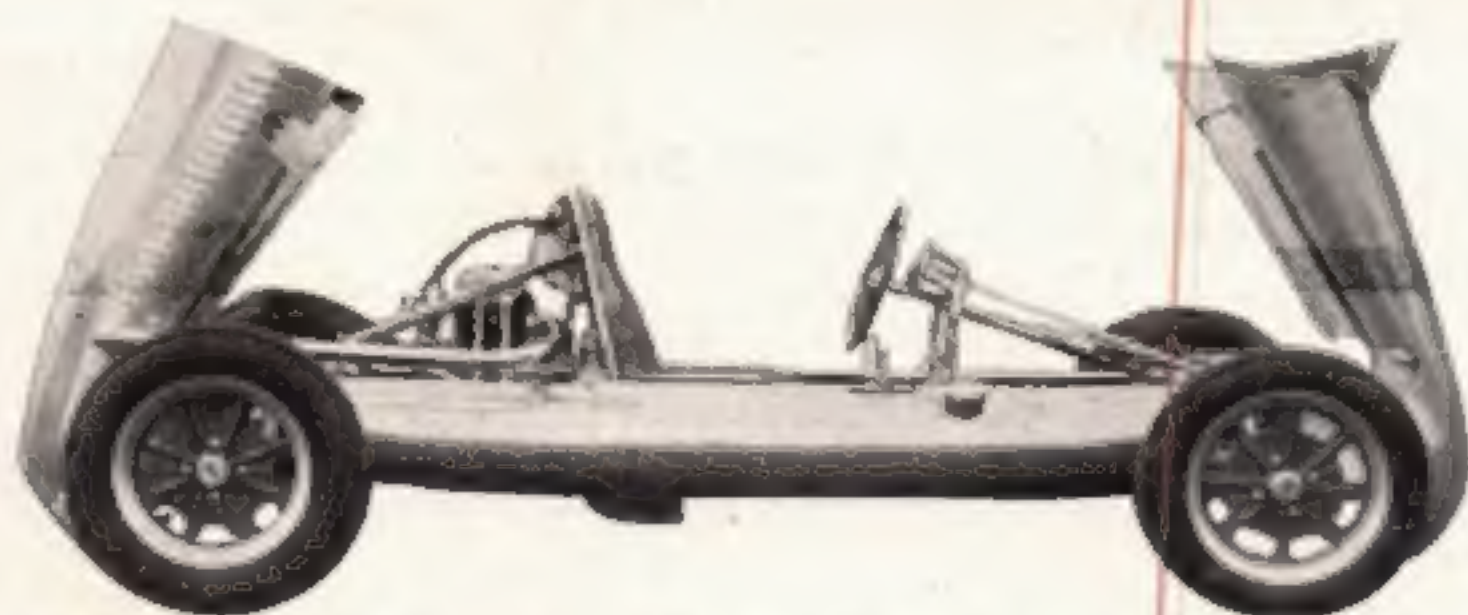
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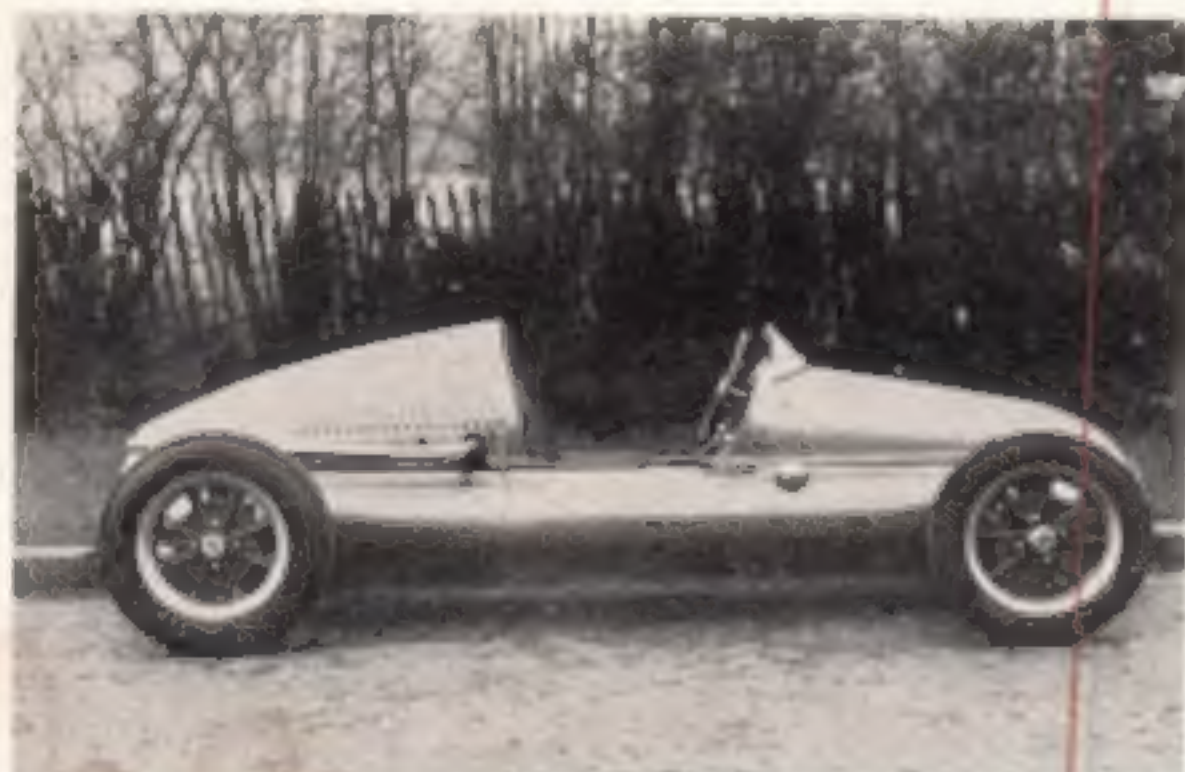
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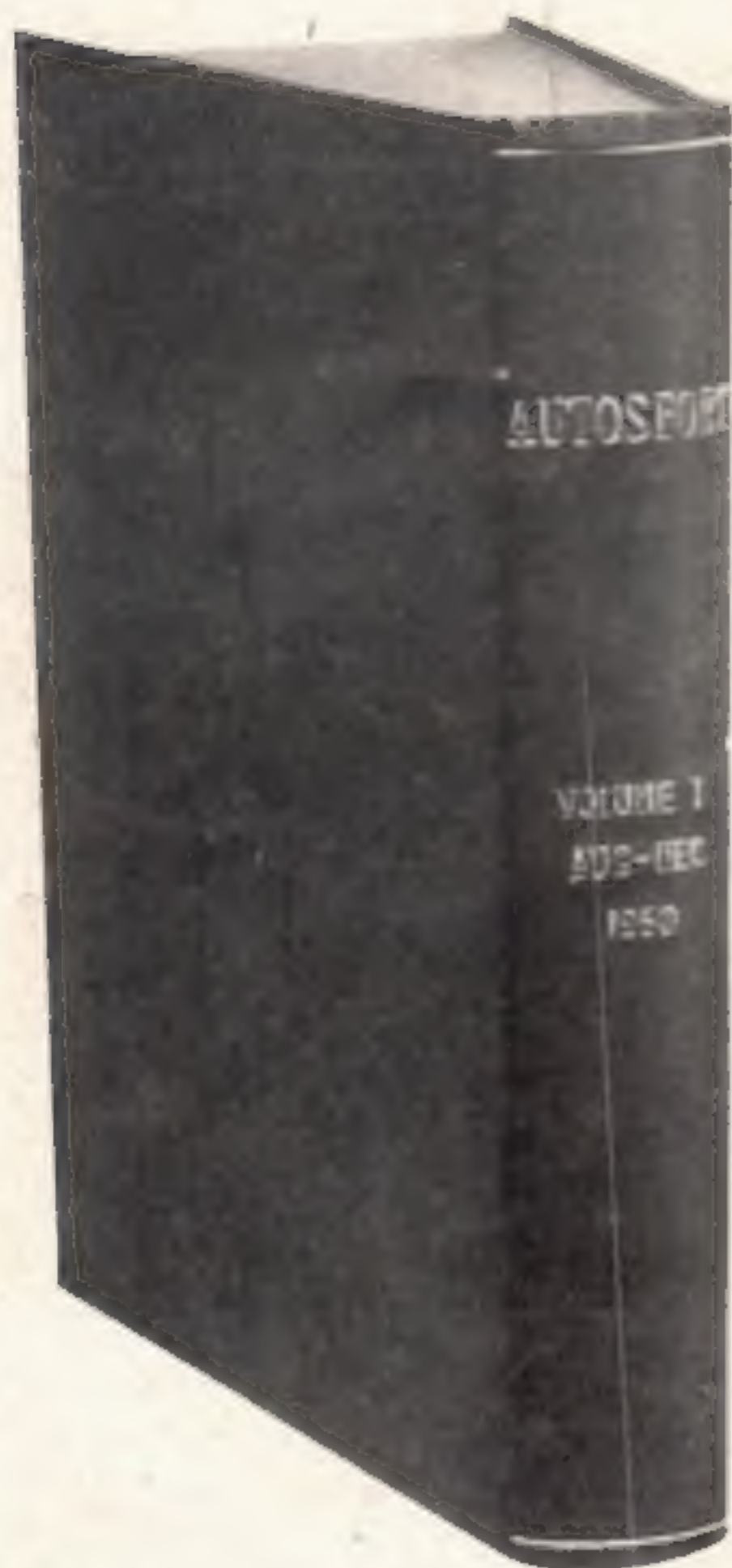
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